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Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EUR/EE:IMSILINS:SAM
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----------117988 290030Z /62
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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CVIS, EEWT, CSCE, SHUM, RO

SUBJECT:SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING ON ROMANIAN EMIGRATION/
MFN

1. DEPARTMENT COUNSELOR NIMETZ, ALONG WITH DAS REICH OF COMMERCE AND GENERAL COUNSEL-DESIGNATE RIVERS OF STR (FORMER FINANCE COMMITTEE STAFFER), PRESENTED ADMINISTRATION POSITION AT SENATE INTERNATIONAL TRADE SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING JUNE 27. (STATEMENTS AND OTHER MATERIALS BEING POUCHED.) SENATOR RIBICOFF PRESIDED FOR ABOUT ONE HOUR OF TWO AND ONE-HALF HOUR SESSION, THEN TURNED CHAIR OVER TO SENATOR CURTIS, WHO IS NOT RPT NOT SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER BUT WAS PUSHING HIS PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO TITLE 4 (S.1713) WHICH WOULD TIE MFN AND CREDITS TO FREEDOM TO EMIGRATE OR TO VISIT US TO JOIN RELATIVES.

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2. RIBICOFF TOOK THE ATTITUDE THAT ROMANIA HAD DEMONSTRATED NO IMPROVEMENT IN EMIGRATION PERFORMANCE, SHOWED LITTLE INTEREST IN SUBJECT BETWEEN CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS, AND HAD ERECTED BUREAUCRATIC OBSTACLE COURSE OF CUMBERSOME PROCEDURES DESIGNED TO DISCOURAGE EMIGRATION. NIMETZ RESPONDED THAT WHILE WE ARE NOT COMPLETELY SATISFIED WITH RESULTS, ROMANIAN EMIGRATION PERFORMANCE HAS

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IMPROVED, WITH EXCEPTION OF ISRAEL, WHERE THERE IS

DISPUTE ABOUT NUMBERS; THAT WE MAINTAIN A DIALOGUE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR WITH THE GOR ON EMIGRATION, BOTH IN BUCHAREST AND WASHINGTON; AND THAT WE HAVE URGED ROMANIANS TO STREAMLINE PROCEDURES.

3. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION FROM SENATOR CURTIS ABOUT HIS AMENDMENT, NIMETZ POINTED OUT THAT HELSINKI FINAL ACT ALSO PROVIDES LEVERAGE IN REUNITING DIVIDED FAMILIES AND THAT WE DO NOT BELIEVE WE SHOULD LINK YET ANOTHER MATTER TO MFN; WE COULD CERTAINLY NOT EXPECT TO MAKE HEADWAY WITH ANY OTHER COUNTRY IN EASTERN EUROPE IF WE PURSUED THIS COURSE. NIMETZ SAID HE WOULD PROVIDE A STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD ON S 1713.

4. ADMINISTRATION PANEL DEPARTED AFTER PERFUNCTORY Q AND A SESSION. NEXT WITNESS, WILLIAM KOREY OF B'NAI B'RITH, PAINTED DISCOURAGING PICTURE OF ROMANIAN PERFORMANCE ON JEWISH EMIGRATION. PRESSED BY RIBICOFF TO ACCOUNT FOR DECLINE, KOREY POINTED TO BURDENSOME EMIGRATION PROCEDURES AS WELL AS "INTIMIDATION AND HARASSMENT," ADDING THAT MANY APPLICATIONS HAD BEEN DISAPPROVED. AFTER CAREFULLY POINTING OUT THAT ROMANIAN INTERNAL PROCEDURES, UNLESS THEY ARE CLEARLY INTENDED TO DISCOURAGE EMIGRATION AND THEREFORE FALL WITHIN PUR-
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VIEW OF WAIVER REVIEW PROCEDURE, MAY WELL BE CONSIDERED A MATTER OF ROMANIAN SOVEREIGNTY, RIBICOFF ASKED KOREY TO SUBMIT TO THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW PROCEDURES COULD BE IMPROVED.

5. RIBICOFF ASKED KOREY HOW THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY COMES OUT, ON BALANCE, ON WAIVER EXTENSION. KOREY REPLIED THAT IN VIEW OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S QUALIFIED RECOMMENDATION (I.E., WILLINGNESS TO RECONSIDER SHOULD EMIGRATION DROP OFF), THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IS "WILLING TO GO ALONG FOR ANOTHER YEAR."

6. NEXT STAGE OF HEARINGS CONCENTRATED ON ECONOMIC ASPECTS, WITH SUPPORTIVE TESTIMONY BY MAX BERRY, MILTON ROSENTHAL, HUGH DONAGHUE OF CDC, AND JOHN LOGAN OF UOP. RIBICOFF URGED ROSENTHAL TO USE COUNCIL TO FURTHER EMIGRATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS OBJECTIVES, SAYING HE WOULD GIVE ROSENTHAL LIST OF RESTRICTIVE PROCEDURES FOR USE IN DISCUSSIONS WITH ROMANIAN OFFICIALS. SENATOR BOB PACKWOOD PUSHED ALL BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES TO ACKNOWLEDGE DESIRABILITY OF LINK BETWEEN ECONOMIC MATTERS SUCH AS MFN AND HUMAN RIGHTS, WHICH ALL RESISTED TO VARYING

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DEGREES.

7. JACOB BIRNBAUM OF CENTER FOR RUSSIAN AND EAST

EUROPEAN JEWRY POINTED TO HALVING OF EMIGRATION RATE TO ISRAEL, CLAIMED THAT HARASSMENT HAD BEEN INSTITUTIONALIZED, AND CALLED FOR IMPROVEMENT OF MONITORING PROCESS. RIBICOFF URGED STATE DEPARTMENT TO CAREFULLY REVIEW BIRNBAUM'S RECOMMENDATIONS.

8. WITH EXCEPTION OF BARBU NICULESCU, WHO TESTIFIED LAST AND WAS STRONGLY SUPPORTIVE OF MFN, MUCH OF REMAINDER OF HEARING CONCENTRATED ON HUMAN RIGHTS, HUNGARIAN MINORITY ISSUE, AND CURTIS AMENDMENT, WITH TESTIMONY FROM SZABOLCS
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MESTERHAZY, ADALBERT FEHER, ANDREI ASZODY, AND LASZLO HAMOS.

9. OUR READING IS THAT RIBICOFF'S TACTICS ARE INTENDED NOT RPT NOT TO BLOCK EMIGRATION BUT TO PUT MAXIMUM PRESSURE ON ROMANIANS TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE AND PERHAPS SIMPLIFY AND SPEED UP PROCEDURES. COMMITTEE STAFFER BOB CASSIDY TOLD US HE THOUGHT COMMITTEE UNLIKELY TO TAKE ANY ACTION OTHER THAN ISSUE HEARING TRANSCRIPT AND MIGHT NOT EVEN ACT ON CURTIS AMENDMENT. MOYNIHAN, INCIDENTALLY, DID NOT APPEAR BUT SENT STATEMENT CLAIMING THAT "HARASSMENT OF THOSE SEEKING TO LEAVE HAS BECOME MORE INTENSE" AND STATING THAT "BLAND ASSURANCES" WILL NO LONGER BE ENOUGH. IN SUM, WHILE THE USUAL CONGRESSIONAL IMPONDERABLES REMAIN, WE BELIEVE SENATE WILL ALLOW WAIVER EXTENSION FOR ANOTHER YEAR. VANCE

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